

States, who defended the value of figures. They were especially concerned that dropping figures would open the way to open competitions and championships, which they considered to be a real disaster.

Well, 14 years have passed since the last figure was skated. Skating has reached unbelievable popularity, its standard is very high, and the quality of skating does not seem to have suffered at all. Just like before, there are good skaters and mediocre skaters. Nobody seems to regret the passing of compulsory figures. On the contrary, now they all seem to think that the idea was a good one.

Quite often during these years I received messages from people who wanted to tell me that they had changed their mind, that they now understand how important it was to bring forward that revolution.

I remember a long interview I gave in the United States. The journalist strongly defended compulsory figures and supported the view that their demise would pervert the sport and even went so far to say that its name would not be appropriate anymore.

My answer shocked and embarrassed her. She did not know that it is only in English that our sport is called "figure skating." In the rest of the world it is called "artistic skating," which is definitely more appropriate. This journalist sent me a message a few years ago, through my son Fabio. She just wanted to let me know that she had completely changed her mind and now appreciated the importance of that decision!

In spring 2000 I even received a letter from David Dore (former Director General of Skate Canada and ISU vice president since 2002), who had been one of the strongest opponents of my project. He says in the letter, "*I still think of all the major contributions you made to the sport with your energy and hours of work. Getting rid of the school figures will ever be your best move.*"